

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BUENOS 01292 01 OF 02 261419Z

44

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

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R 261305Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4632

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 1292

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS DIA AT YOUR DISCRETION

FOR ASSISTANT SEC ROGERS FROM AMB HILL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MILI, AR

SUBJECT: COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, ARGENTINE AIR FORCE, BRIGADIER

MAYOR ORLANDO RAMON AGOSTI

REF: BUENOS AIRES 1186

COMPLETE TEXT OF MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION EXCERPTED IN BUENOS
AIRES 1186 BEING TRANSMITTED IN VIEW OF TIMELINESS. SUBJECT AS
ABOVE.

PARTICIPANTS: AMERICANS

AMBASSADOR ROBERT C. HILL

COLONEL PAUL A. COUGHLIN, USA, U.S. DEFENSE

ATTACHE

LT COL FRANCISCO VAZQUEZ, ACTING AIR ATTACHE

LT COL ANTHONY J. WEISS, ACTING CHIEF, AIR FORCE

SECTION, USMILGP

ARGENTINES:

GENERAL AGOSTI

1. AMBASSADOR HILL AND HIS PARTY WERE WARMLY GREETED BY BRIGADIER
AGOSTI IN HIS SPACIOUS OFFICE AT THE MODERN CONDOR BUILDING, WHICH
SERVES AS AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS.

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PAGE 02 BUENOS 01292 01 OF 02 261419Z

2. THE AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED HIS PLEASURE AT HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO CALL ON BRIGADIER AGOSTI AND EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE WHICH THE UNITED STATES ATTACHES TO THE MAINTENANCE OF GOOD RELATIONS AND CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR AIR FORCES. THE BRIGADIER REPLIED BY ASSURING THE AMBASSADOR THAT THE ARGENTINE AIR FORCE ALSO PLACED GREAT VALUE ON OUR CONTINUED GOOD RELATIONS.

3. AMBASSADOR HILL THEN INQUIRED IF THE BRIGADIER WAS SATISFIED WITH THE ACTION WHICH HAD BEEN TAKEN BY THE U.S. IN RESPONSE TO THE RECENT ARGENTINE AIR FORCE REQUEST FOR ASSIGNMENT OF ADDITIONAL US AIR FORCE OFFICERS TO THE AIR MISSION. SINCE THE BRIGADIER DID NOT APPEAR TO BE FULLY CONVERSANT WITH THE SUBJECT, LTC WEISS ELABORATED EXPLAINING THAT A SINGLE WELL-QUALIFIED U.S. AIR FORCE OFFICER COULD PROVIDE THE SKILLS NEEDED AND THAT SUCH AN OFFICER HAD BEEN PROGRAMMED TO ARRIVE BY THE END OF MAY. BRIGADIER AGOSTI INDICATED HIS AGREEMENT TO THE U.S. RESPONSE AND AMBASSADOR HILL DIRECTED LTC WEISS TO MONITOR THE ACTION CLOSELY TO AVOID UNNECESSARY DELAYS IN THE ARRIVAL OF THE NEW OFFICER. WHEN THE SUBJECTS OF FMS CREDITS AND EQUIPMENT COSTS WERE BROUGHT UP, IT WAS AGAIN NECESSARY FOR LTC WEISS TO BRIEF THE CINC ON THE DETAILS, BUT NO DISAGREEMENTS AROSE. THE AMBASSADOR WENT ON TO ASK THE BRIGADIER HIS OPINION OF THE VALUE OF EXCHANGE COURSES FOR AIR FORCE PERSONNEL. BRIGADIER AGOSTI REPLIED BY STRONGLY ENDORSING THE PROGRAM AND SINGLED OUT THE TRAINING AT AIR UNIVERSITY AT MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE AS BEING PARTICULARLY VALUABLE. WHEN ASKED IF HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE OPERATION OF THE U.S. AIR FORCE MISSION THE BRIGADIER WAS EMPHATIC IN EXPRESSING HIS SATISFACTION.

4. THE AMBASSADOR THEN INQUIRED IF THE BRIGADIER HAD RECENT NEWS OF THE CONDITION OF RETIRED BRIGADIER MAYOR CORBAT. HE REPLIED THAT CORBAT WAS RECUPERATING NICELY FROM AN INITIAL OPERATION PERFORMED AT WALTER REED HOSPITAL, BUT MIGHT HAVE TO ENDURE A SECOND OPERATION. HE THEN EXPRESSED HIS SINCERE APPRECIATION FOR THE AMBASSADOR'S RAPID RESPONSE TO THE REQUEST FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR BRIGADIER CORBAT AND TO THE RECEPTION WHICH HE RECEIVED IN THE U.S.

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PAGE 03 BUENOS 01292 01 OF 02 261419Z

5. AMBASSADOR HILL THEN THANKED THE BRIGADIER FOR RECEIVING HIM AND ASKED IF THERE WAS ANY OTHER SUBJECT WHICH HE WISHED TO DISCUSS. HE REPLIED THAT HE HAD ONLY ONE QUESTION. HOW DID THE AMBASSADOR SEE THE CURRENT SITUATION IN ARGENTINA. THE AMBASSADOR HESITATED AND THEN REPLIED THAT SUCH A QUESTION REQUIRED A FRANK RESPONSE. HE ASKED IF THE BRIGADIER WANTED SUCH A RESPONSE. THE BRIGADIER SAID THAT BY ALL MEANS HE WISHED A FRANK REPLY. THE AMBASSADOR REFERRING TO MRS PERON'S SPEECH OF THE

PREVIOUS EVENING STATED THAT HE SENSED IT HAD BEEN AN ASTUTE MOVE AND THAT SHE PROBABLY HAD BOUUGHT ADDITIONAL TIME FOR HER GOVERNMENT.

THE AMBASSADOR THEN STATED THAT CONCERN IS GROWING THAT THE CONSTITUTIONALIST POLICY FOLLOWED BY THE ARMED FORCE IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY AND PUBLICLY EXPRESSED BY GENERAL VIDELA, HAS YIELDED IN RECENT WEEKS TO A RESIGNATION THAT MILITARY INTERVENTION IS THE ONLY WAY OUT OF THE COUNTRY'S SERIOUS PLIGHT. AT THE SAME TIME, THE AMBASSADOR HAS DISCERNED AN INCREASING INTEREST AMONG INFLUENTIAL ARGENTINES IN WHAT ATTITUDE THE U.S. WOULD ADOPT IF SUCH AN INTERVENTION OCCURS. SOME PEOPLE ARE WORRIED THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES MIGHT BE SERIOUSLY STRAINED AS THEY HAVE BEEN WITH CHILE SINCE THE PINOCHET COUP.

6. THE AMBASSADOR THEN ADDRESSED TWO POTENTIAL PROBLEM AREAS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ARGENTINA. IN CITING THE FIRST OF THESE, HE POINTED TO THE RECENT CUT-OFF OF U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO CHILE AS AN EXAMPLE OF A REACTION WHICH SHOULD BE EXPECTED FROM THE U.S. CONGRESS WHEN THERE ARE REPEATED CHARGES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. THE CONGRESS CAN BE EXPECTED TO BECOME EVEN MORE SENSITIVE TO THIS ISSUE AS U.S. ELECTIONS APPROACH. THE SECOND PROBLEM AREA IS RELATED TO THE U.S. FOREIGN TRADE ACT UNDER WHICH GENERALIZED SPECIAL PREFERENCES ON TARIFFS MAY BE SUSPENDED FOR COUNTRIES NOT MAKING ADEQUATE COMPENSATION FOR NATIONALIZED U.S. FIRMS. SHOULD ARGENTINA BE DECLARED INELIGIBLE FOR PREFERENCES, IT WOULD MEAN A POTENTIAL LOSS TO THE COUNTRY OF 40 MILLION DOLLARS IN ADDED EXPORTS. THEREFORE, THE AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZED, IT IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE THAT REAL PROGRESS BE MADE TOWARD NEGOTIATING COMPENSATION IN SOME OR ALL OF THE CASES NOW PENDING. HE THEN IDENTIFIED THE COMPANIES INVOLVED. CONTINUING ON ECONOMIC MATTERS, THE AMBASSADOR RECALLED THAT CONSIDERABLE EFFORT HAD BEEN EXPENDED IN THE U.S. WORKING WITH THE CAFIERO MISSION LAST SEPTEMBER. THE RESULTS WERE THAT ARGENTINA WAS ABLE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 BUENOS 01292 01 OF 02 261419Z

TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY CREDITS FROM COMMERCIAL U.S. LENDING INSTITUTIONS. NOW, HOWEVER, THERE IS LITTLE CHANCE OF SUCH CREDITS BECAUSE OF THE RAPIDLY DETERIORATING ECONOMY AND THE LOSS IN VALUE OF THE PESO. HE STRESSED HIS AWARENESS OF THE PERONIST RELUCTANCE TO APPROACH THE IMF, AND THE INTERNAL POLITICAL RISKS INVOLVED IN SUCH A MOVE. HOWEVER, HE ALSO UNDERLINED THAT UNTIL ARGENTINA GOES TO THE IMF TO DRAW ON ITS CREDITS, FUNDS FROM OTHER SOURCES PROBABLY WILL BE NOT BE FORTHCOMING.

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED DIA.

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 01292 02 OF 02 261407Z

41

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 261305Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4633

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 1292

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS DIA AT YOUR DISCRETION

FOR ASSISTANT SEC ROGERS FROM AMB HILL

7. THE AMBASSADOR TOLD THE BRIGADIER THAT HE HAD RECEIVED QUERIES, BOTH DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY, ON THE U.S. POLICY WITH RESPECT TO RECOGNITION OF NEW GOVERNMENTS. HE STATED THAT THE MAIN CONDITION NEEDED FOR U.S. RECOGNITION IS THAT A GOVERNMENT BE ABLE TO EXERCISE EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF THE COUNTRY AND FULFILL ITS INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS.

8. AT THIS POINT, THE AMBASSADOR AGAIN STRESSED AS HE HAD SEVERAL TIMES PREVIOUSLY, THAT THE US VIEWS THE CURRENT ARGENTINE SITUATION AS BEING AN INTERNAL PROBLEM WHICH CAN ONLY BE SOLVED BY ARGENTINES. HE ADDED THAT HE HAD SPOKEN FRANKLY SINCE THE BRIGADIER'S QUESTION DESERVED THE BEST ANSWER WHICH HE COULD PROVIDE, BUT THAT NOTHING IN HIS RESPONSE SHOULD BE INTERPRETED AS ADVICE CONCERNING THE PROBLEMS WHICH ONLY ARGENTINES CAN SOLVE.

9. AS THE AMBASSADOR PREPARED TO DEPART, HE STATED HE HAD NO OBJECTION IF THE BRIGADIER DESIRED TO INFORM THE NAVY AND ARMY CINCS OF THEIR CONVERSATION SINCE HE PROBABLY WOULD NOT HAVE AN APPROPRIATE OCCASION TO DO SO.

10. BRIGAIDER AGOSTI THANKED AMBASSADOR HILL FOR HIS FRANK, COMPLETE AND CLEAR RESPONSE. AFTER EXCHANGING PLEASANTRIES, THE GROUP DEPARTED.

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PAGE 02 BUENOS 01292 02 OF 02 261407Z

11. COMMENT: BRIGADIER AGOSTI WAS OBVIOUSLY PREOCCUPIED WITH
POLITICAL MATTERS AND DID NOT PARTICULARLY WANT TO DISCUSS
MILITARY TOPICS. IN ANSWERING THE BRIGADIER'S SOLE QUESTION,
THE AMBASSADOR REPEATEDLY STRESSED THE FACT THAT THE U.S. HAS
NO INTENTION OR DESIRE TO INTERVENE IN THE SERIOUS INTERNAL PROBLEMS
FACING ARGENTINA.
HILL

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